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Letter dated 15 January 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated 29 December 2009 (S/2009/694), by which I transmitted a joint letter dated 19 December 2009 from President Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire and President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso proposing the deployment, for a period of three months, of a battalion of 500 personnel from Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire, as part of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), in order to reinforce security arrangements for the Ivorian presidential election.

In my letter, I indicated that I would revert to the Security Council with specific recommendations after conducting the necessary assessment of the offer. Given the urgency of the matter in light of the timelines of the election and the upcoming UNOCI mandate renewal consultations of the Council, UNOCI dispatched a team to Burkina Faso to conduct a rapid preliminary assessment of the capabilities of the proposed unit and the feasibility of its timely deployment. The Burkinabé military officials who received the team confirmed their readiness to deploy to UNOCI a properly trained battalion of 500 personnel, which includes aviation capability in the form of one military helicopter and crew. However, the assessment team was not able to inspect the unit earmarked for deployment to Côte d'Ivoire since it was yet to be constituted. The Secretariat will conduct the usual predeployment verification to ensure that the battalion is adequately equipped, once the Government of Burkina Faso confirms the dates of the planned visit.

In my report to the Security Council of 29 September 2009 (S/2009/495), I had indicated my intention to request the authorization of the Council for the temporary redeployment of one infantry company and two helicopters from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to Côte d'Ivoire to reinforce UNOCI during the elections, within the framework of the inter-mission cooperation arrangements provided for in Council resolution 1609 (2005). However, UNMIL has confirmed that this option is no longer feasible, as the election date of Côte d'Ivoire has shifted and the deployment of the earmarked infantry company would now conflict with the Mission's drawdown schedule. In addition, the concerned troop-contributing country that had been approached to provide the helicopters is not in a position to approve their transfer from UNMIL to UNOCI.

In the meantime, it has also become clear that the Ivorian national army and the Forces nouvelles will not be able to deploy the full complement of the agreed 8,000 personnel as mixed brigades to provide security for the elections along with

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UNOCI. They would be able to provide only 2,000 personnel. There is therefore an unforeseen security gap that UNOCI has to cover.

In light of the above, I recommend that the Security Council approve the proposal by President Laurent Gbagbo and President Blaise Compaoré to deploy a battalion from Burkina Faso, including one helicopter with crew, for a period of three months beginning one month before the presidential election. The Secretariat estimates that the cost of this deployment, including the helicopter and crew, would amount to some US$ 5 million. This option has the advantage that it would provide the capability that UNMIL is no longer able to provide and would make up for the shortfalls on the part of the national arrangements for securing the elections. However, it would require the consent of the Security Council to temporarily increase the authorized troop ceiling of UNOCI from 7,450 to 7,950 personnel. The mission's current troop strength stands at 7,391.

I would be most grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon